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**Allegheny County MBE Advisory Committee Conference Call Minutes**  
**Friday, September 20, 2013**  
**10:00 a.m.**

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**Advisory Committee Members Who Participated:**

Ola Jackson – Founder/CEO – Onyx Woman Network (OWN)  
M. Gayle Moss – Chair, MBE Advisory Committee  
Roxanne Sewell – President, LJS Publishing/Talk Magazine  
Toni Silva – Supplier Relations Director, UPMC  
Gregory Spencer – President/CEO, Randall Industries, LLC  
Marc Little – CEO/President, Minority and Women Educational Labor Agency (MWELA)  
James Overton – Chairman/President, City of Pittsburgh Equal Opportunity Review  
Commission/Overton Financial Group

**Advisory Committee Members Absent:**

Austin Davis – Executive Assistant, Office of the Allegheny County Executive  
Victor Diaz – President, VideoTek Construction  
Tim Stevens – Chairman, Black Political Empowerment Project (B-PEP)  
Larry Brinker – President/CEO, Brinker Group  
Abass Kamara – Carey Group  
Iftikhar Malik – President, Shawn Malik, Inc.

**Also Present:**

Ruth Byrd-Smith – Director, Allegheny County Department of M/W/DBE  
Lisa Edmonds – Deputy Director, Allegheny County Department of M/W/DBE  
Barbara Parees – Deputy County Manager, Office of the Allegheny County Manager  
Naomi Hale – Temporary Employee, Allegheny County Department of M/W/DBE

## **Business at Hand:**

M. Gayle Moss opened the call by referencing the last two meetings the Committee has had and her own contemplation of what can be done to improve the M/W/DBE Department and its processes. She briefed the Committee on a meeting she had with County Executive Rich Fitzgerald about the Department and what he expects from it, as well as the direction in which he would like the Committee to go. Afterwards, she spoke with Ruth Byrd-Smith regarding his remarks and the two of them came up with ideas for the Department and Committee that they would now like to share with the Committee for all of them to collaborate on and eventually implement, which is the purpose for this conference call.

The first order of business is the integration plan which had been discussed at the previous meeting. Toni Silva will head this plan and come together with other Committee members who have volunteered to assist her to create an effective process for small M/W/DBEs to be better served by the Department and, therefore, be better suited to perform on contracts. Furthermore, the integration plan should be designed to make businesses aware that the M/W/DBE Department exists because it has been determined that one thing that has impeded the Department's effectiveness is the lack of familiarity among businesses with the Department. Ms. Moss reported that the County Executive is in agreement with the integration model, and hopes that between today's meeting and the next Advisory Committee meeting a complete integration plan will be drafted.

The second order of business is the Department's budget. The budget is \$480,000 and is either the smallest or second smallest budget of all of the departments. Ms. Moss stated that this budget is too small for the amount of work that the Department needs to carry out and said that a review of the budget needs to be done to see an increase. She asked for the Committee's support because in order for them to achieve some of the things they are planning, more money is needed.

The third order of business is legislation. The legislation is the portion of the Administrative Code that details the infrastructure of the Department. When Ms. Moss first joined the Advisory Committee, the legislation was rather outdated so it was revised and updated and sent to be approved. However, it has been two years since it was sent and though the Law Department has approved it, approval has not yet been given by the County Executive's Office. Ms. Moss informed the Committee that she will be giving that task to Austin Davis.

The fourth order of business is having clearly defined outcomes, as discussed in the last meeting. Greg Spencer shared his concerns and suggestions at that meeting, and Ms. Moss asked that the rest of the Committee do the same so that they can be a strong asset to the Department.

Ms. Moss also brought up the topic of de-bundling contract packages. The County Executive thinks that to improve the Department's number of M/W/DBE participation, more small businesses need to be given contracts.

Ms. Silva suggested that the County Executive attend at least two Advisory Committee meetings each year so that he can have an understanding of what goes on with the Committee and what they do. She thinks that Mr. Davis' participation is helpful but that the Executive needs to experience it and get the information firsthand. She also assured those present that she will schedule a meeting for the integration model for preferably the first week of October.

Mr. Davis, Ola Jackson and Mr. Spencer previously volunteered to participate in the subcommittee.

Ms. Jackson asked if it would be possible to have small business owners take part in Committee meetings and express exactly what it is that they need or would like to see the Committee do. Ms. Moss asked Ms. Jackson if she thought it would be better to hear from certified or uncertified business owners. Ms. Jackson thought a combination would be most helpful to them. She reinforced that the Committee needs to hear directly from businesses to best serve them. Mr. Spencer and Ms. Silva agreed. Marc Little addressed what he saw to be the largest issue, which is that there are not enough resources for the Department and the small firms that they service. These small firms do not have the capacity to meet the needs of larger contracts so they need to be supported, especially if contracts are to be de-bundled for them. Ms. Moss asked if de-bundling and the other improvements the Committee wants to make should be included in the legislation. Ms. Byrd-Smith replied that while the Allegheny County Administrative Code does address the requirements and criteria for how the department is run, it addresses the high-level infrastructure. Roxanne Sewell asked if there is a standard that has to be met for every contract, etc. and Ms. Byrd-Smith referred to the report she had introduced to the Committee at the previous meeting.

Ms. Moss stated that she would like to send the County Executive a letter after the integration model meeting and the next Committee meeting to let him know what has been discussed and what the Committee is planning on doing. Ms. Sewell volunteered to be a part of the integration model design. Ms. Byrd-Smith reads the list of documented volunteers as the following: Austin Davis, Ola Jackson, Greg Spencer, Toni Silva and Roxanne Sewell. Ms. Byrd-Smith asked if there were any other volunteers, and no other Committee members volunteered.